



“Peace, Salaam, Shalom”: Functions of Collective Singing in U.S. Peace Activism

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ABSTRACT

This article adds to the emerging literature on music and conflict transformation by highlighting the use of collective singing by U.S. peace activists when engaged in various peace movement activities. Based on preliminary findings from focus groups with peace activists and in-depth interviews with notable peace musicians, this article asserts that group sing alongs have helped in mobilizing U.S. peace activism efforts over the last four decades through three specific functions: 1) extending frames to include broader peace and justice issues; 2) strengthening cognitive liberation amongst activists; and 3) appealing to and reinforcing a wide range of activists’ emotions. Although the group sing along may seem passé within some activist circles, this article affirms that it has served and continues to serve key functions in the peace protest repertoire. The article concludes with a discussion of issues that threaten the future of group sing alongs and urges conflict transformation practitioners and peace movement leaders to recognize the utility of collective singing so as to reinvigorate this long-standing tradition within social movements.

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INTRODUCTION

We believe in peace, we can work for peace, we will live in peace. (Lyrics from the song, “Peace, Salaam, Shalom” by Pat Humphries and Sandy O of Emma’s Revolution)

This paper seeks to add to the developing field of music and conflict transformation by examining the uses of collective singing in U.S. peace activism over the last four decades. Drawing on focus groups conducted with U.S. peace activists and interviews with distinguished peace musicians, this paper argues that collective singing has served three critical functions in mobilizing U.S. peace building efforts: 1) extending frames to include broader peace and justice issues; 2) strengthening cognitive liberation amongst activists; and 3) appealing to and reinforcing a wide range of activists’ emotions. Before delving into the study’s methods and findings, I will first explain how I became interested in analyzing the use of collective singing amongst U.S. peace activists. I will then provide a brief overview of the music and conflict transformation literature, highlighting how work on “collective singing” in social movements can add to the field. Given my explicit focus on collective singing as a social movements’ strategy, I then discuss the three concepts that theoretically ground this article from the social movements literature: frame extension, cognitive liberation, and emotions.

As a musician and sociologist interested in culture and social movements, I often mused about the seeming silence of innovative anti-war music in the U.S. mass media since America began its latest wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. My dissertation entitled “The Silent Soundtrack: Anti-war Music from Vietnam to Iraq,” explored the presence of anti-war music in the U.S. mass media, primarily comparing historical trends in the amount and popularity of anti-war music from the Vietnam era to the Afghanistan/Iraq era¹, utilizing a critical media framework (Brooks 2009). The main focus of my dissertation was the completion and analysis of an original database of nearly 3,000 anti-war songs that were commercially released in the U.S. from 1963-2007. This database represents the most comprehensive dataset on American anti-war music in the mass media that has been completed to date. (Please see [YouTube video](#) explaining the study’s main findings).

As part of my dissertation, I also conducted video interviews with expert informants in music, peace movements, and media (including notable musicians like Pete Seeger and Peter Yarrow²) and reviewed various literatures to supplement the database analysis.³

My questions in the focus groups and interviews highlighted a range of topics (i.e., differences in amount and popularity of anti-war music between the Vietnam and Afghanistan/Iraq eras, the role of protest music in socializing the participants into activist identities, views on the changing U.S. media landscape that has altered the way anti-war music is disseminated, etc.). Due to the diverse topics covered in my

¹ I selected January 1, 1963 as the starting date for the Vietnam conflict, due to the fact that this was the year that the U.S. noticeably increased its presence in Vietnam to 15,000 military advisors. The end date was arbitrarily set at December 31, 2007 due to the fact that the War in Afghanistan and the 2nd War in Iraq still continues. My dissertation focused on a comparison between the two eras of Vietnam and Afghanistan/Iraq, given that these wars represent the longest military ventures in American history and resulted in anti-war protests in the different periods that questioned American’s use of military force vs. strengthening diplomatic efforts.

² Brief artist biographies are included in the appendix.

³ Currently, I am formalizing my findings and am conducting more video interviews with anti-war musicians and media scholars, as well as leading focus groups with peace activists to transform my research into a book and documentary film.

research, I was surprised by the extent that group sing alongs were alluded to in both the focus group discussions and in the artists' interviews. This led me to study the topic of collective singing more deeply and to analyze how it may have served functions in mobilizing U.S. peace activism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MUSIC AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND "COLLECTIVE SINGING" IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The music and conflict transformation literature is still developing and contains a number of disparate emphases (Bergh, 2010; Urbain et al., 2008). According to Bergh (2010), music and conflict transformation studies have focused on everything from small and large scale cross-cultural music events (Beckles, 2007; Frith & Street, 1992; Skyllstad, 1995), reconciliation (Gray, 2008), music therapy as a means to heal traumatic memories related to conflicts (Jordanger, 2008; Vinader, 2008), and much more.⁴

Recently, studies that focus on "collective singing" in social movements have also begun to emerge in the music and conflict transformation literature (Benison, 2009; Whitehead, 2008), although these studies are less prevalent than the aforementioned research areas. Benison's study of the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza strip is particularly notable given that he considered the impact of different types of group sing alongs for both the protestors and for those to whom the collective singing was targeted: namely the security force members charged with the task of evacuating the Jewish settlements. In Benison's study, protestors expressed hope that their singing would cause the security force members to reconsider their orders and would dissuade them from carrying out the evacuations. Ultimately, Benison found that although the collective singing did not cause the security force members to disobey their orders to perform the evacuations, the protestors' singing of quiet and sad religious songs did emotionally touch the security members and caused them to feel greater empathy for the protestors.

In addition to engendering outsider support, one of the key functions of collective singing is to create solidarity amongst social movement activists themselves. In their influential work, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century*, Eyerman and Jamison explain how collective singing, born out of the African American traditions of the Negro spiritual and church gospel music, helped to strengthen the resolve and commitment of civil rights activists (1998). In this way, group sing alongs served as an inspiration for activists as they engaged in high-risk protest activities (i.e., facing police dogs, clubs, fire hoses, and sneering counter protestors) or after the protests to lift their spirits as they were held in desolate jail cells. They also describe how collective singing acted as a bridge to coalesce the wide range of groups that were involved in the civil rights movement⁵ (e.g., varying class

⁴ The literature cited here represents a fraction of the work done in these areas. Bergh (2008; 2010) has conducted one of the most comprehensive reviews of the literature to date and has developed a useful typology for categorizing the work done in music and conflict transformation.

⁵ The African American Civil Rights movement started in 1955 with the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). Through this action, African Americans were protesting being relegated to sit at the back of the bus when whites boarded. This boycott was followed by ten years of intense protest activity which sought full equality for African Americans in American society (e.g., sit-ins to integrate segregated lunch counters, freedom rides to integrate private bus lines, various marches to demand civil rights, voter registration drives to ensure blacks the right to vote, etc.). The movement was largely considered over after the U.S. Congress passed Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

and status groups, black and white supporters, and blacks from different regions—rural and urban/northern and southern).

In addition, Eyerman and Jamison assert that group sing along songs lent them to shared performance given that the melodies were simple and the choruses were easily repeatable (1998). Furthermore, they note that the songs were not dogmatic or overly ideological so as to be inclusive as possible, reflecting universal themes of brotherhood and integration.

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that collective singing—as a social movement strategy—can add to the music and conflict transformation field. Given that my focus is on social movements in particular, I next explore three concepts from the social movement literature that theoretically ground my arguments concerning the functions of collective singing in U.S. peace activism.

FRAME EXTENSION

The concepts of frames and framing were first popularized by the work of Erving Goffman (1974), and later expanded by David Snow and his colleagues who defined frames as “schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large” (1986, p. 464). When social movements are involved in actively framing an issue, they are strategically deciding how to present a narrative about the issue in question to the public. In attempting to “grow” a movement, Snow and his colleagues argue that frame extension is one of the key mobilization strategies. Frame extension is defined as the extent to which activists and social movement organizations “have to extend the boundaries of its primary framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to its primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents” (1986, p. 472). Snow et al. illustrate frame extension by explaining the efforts of a mostly white Austin, Texas-based peace coalition who attempted to expand their framing to include racial and ethnic minorities. They note that a new goal was placed prominently in their promotional literature: “to promote social justice by non-violently confronting racism, sexism, and all forms of discrimination and oppression” (1986, p. 472). This notion of extending frames to include broader peace and justice issues in order to outreach to a larger pool of potential members was a key element that my respondents discussed and will be explored more in this paper.

COGNITIVE LIBERATION

The concept of cognitive liberation is an integral part of the Political Process Model that was developed by McAdam (1982) to explain how social movements emerge. Originally theorized to explain the emergence of the Civil Rights movement, McAdam asserts that the black freedom struggle was abetted by three conflating factors: 1) expanding political opportunities (i.e., the decline of cotton industry in the early 1900s which led to increasing black migration to the north and the subsequent empowerment of the black vote and the growth of the Democratic party); 2) indigenous organizational strength (i.e., the increasing emergence of Southern NAACP chapters, black colleges and the black church); and 3) cognitive liberation (i.e., blacks increasingly defined their situations as unjust and believed it could change through collective action) (1982).

In developing this concept of cognitive liberation, McAdam stresses the importance of the group process in movement participants' interpretation of cues that political change is possible through social movement action. He states:

The key phrase here is 'groups of people.'...the process of cognitive liberation is held to be both more likely and of far greater consequence under conditions of strong rather than weak social integration...In the absence of strong interpersonal links to others, people are likely to feel powerless to change conditions.... (1982, p. 50)

This article will illustrate how group sing alongs served the function of building cognitive liberation amongst peace activists by creating a sense of collectivity that empowered them to believe that they could affect change through their peace activism.

EMOTIONS

Although various scholars have decried the absence of emotions in social movement analyses, they acknowledge that more attention is being paid to the role of emotions in recent years (Flacks, 2004; Goodwin & Jasper, 2004). Even McAdam, as the father of political process model which originally preferenced "structure," has increasingly recognized the importance of emotions in motivating "agency" (2004). He has now revised his earlier theorizing to highlight that emotions and cognitions—combined with a sense of collective identity—are all necessary components in bringing about cognitive liberation (2004).

Recent protest music scholarship has increasingly recognized the salience of emotions in communicating social movement messages. Roscigno, Danaher and Summers-Effler claim that emotion as well as cognition factor into building a social movements' culture (2002). Corte and Edwards make the point even stronger in their study of white power music, arguing that emotion represents music's underlying power: "Music, in fact, is both personal and collective and reaches its listeners through emotion" (2008, p. 9).

Thus far in the social movements literature, Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk (2006) have conducted one of the most comprehensive analyses of emotions in the protest music, social movements literature. Through in-depth interviews with 59 White Power Movement leaders and activists, they analyzed how music within this movement solidified "vitalizing" (Taylor, 2000), "reciprocal", and "reactive" (Jasper, 1998) emotions. This paper will add to the protest music, social movements literature by highlighting the power of emotions in collective singing.

METHODS

For this research, I utilized two qualitative methods—focus groups and in-depth interviews. It was decided to use qualitative research techniques for this research, as these techniques are particularly useful in gaining more detailed findings than quantitative methods such as surveys (Babbie, 2004).

Two focus groups were conducted in the fall of 2009 with peace activists that were originally recruited from an e-mail sent to the War Resisters' League in New York City. Activists associated with the War Resisters' League are known for their strong pacifist stance and act as an umbrella group that reaches a variety of peace and justice activists. Most of the participants in the first group were also members of the

Catholic Worker, a faith-based social justice organization committed to fighting income inequality, militarism, and other social problems. The second group was mainly comprised of undergraduate students who were involved in their college's social justice program and had been recruited to attend by their political science professor who was active in both the Catholic Worker and the War Resisters League, and was the faculty mentor of the college's social justice program. The number of respondents for the focus groups totalled 17 (i.e., 11 attended the first group and 6 attended the second). The ages of respondents ranged from 19 to 65; 10 of the participants were women and 7 were men. Most respondents were white, non-Hispanic. However, three of the students were Palestinian and one was African American.

As part of my dissertation, I also had conducted interviews with various well-informed sources (journalists, music archivists, and musicians) from June 2005 to September 2006, five of which were interviews (roughly one hour each) with peace musicians that I am drawing upon for this article (see Brooks 2009 for full discussion of methodology of interviews).

I was fortunate enough to sit down with distinguished musicians in peace and protest music (i.e., Pete Seeger; Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary; Michael Lydon, one of the founding editors and early writers for *Rolling Stone* magazine and committed peace musician himself; Peter Siegel, a protest and peace musician in his thirties that is a regular performer at Seeger's Clearwater Festival; and Mark Mangold, songwriter, producer, and major label artist). Full artist bios are presented in Appendix 1. It should be noted that all five peace musicians were white males. I actively tried to recruit women respondents and respondents of color, but was not able to secure interviews at the time of my dissertation research. However, when examining my entire sample for this study, this study included a total of 22 respondents which included a more even breakdown of the sexes (i.e., 17 from the focus groups with peace activists and five from the interviews with peace musicians, representing 12 men and 10 women).⁶

I transcribed the focus groups and interviews and then performed an analysis of the content by hand. I performed line-by-line coding to identify general concepts and themes and then more focused coding, to verify relationships between concepts.

I will now share the results of my research and illustrate how the three functions of collective singing mobilized these peace activists.

FINDINGS

FUNCTION 1: EXTENDING FRAMES TO INCLUDE BROADER PEACE AND JUSTICE ISSUES

All respondents in this research were actively involved or were concerned with numerous social justice issues, (i.e., immigrants' rights, Guantanamo detainees, torture, housing, anti-racism and anti-sexism campaigns, anti-poverty issues, the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, environmental concerns, etc.) and many noted that their anti-war activism fit into this overarching concern with broader peace and justice issues.

⁶ I am aware of the limitations of this sample and am actively seeking to conduct future research with broader populations to extend my current findings.

Indeed, some respondents discussed how they first came to peace activism through exposure to other social justice concerns and the protest music associated with those issues.

I'm a Palestinian and even growing up – my father would put on songs about the freedom of Palestine....And that's when I started learning about what is really going on and questioning the whole justice issue.... [Protest] music is where I found that topic, justice. (FG Participant, Nor)

I've always been socially aware, because I'm also Palestinian. And so it's part of my background to strive for peace and justice. But [protest] music reinforces it for me. (FG Participant, Moe)

Given participants' interest and involvement in broader peace and justice issues, one respondent noted that it was difficult to reflect on anti-war music and peace activism, separate from the larger project of working for peace and justice. He argued:

It's hard for me to isolate the anti-war part from ... "We Shall Overcome" which was used before it was used for anti-war. Especially in the 60s, the same people that were involved in the civil rights movement were also involved in the anti-war movement and often involved in – you know – other issues as well – you know justice issues. And I also would think that that applies certainly to people in this room. Many of us work on anti-war stuff and also work on other justice issues. And the whole "if you want peace, work for justice" is ringing in my ears. Because I think that's so true. To isolate is somewhat defeatist in stopping war. (FG Participant, Jim)

Applying this commitment to broader peace and justice work, most respondents discussed utilizing sing alongs in their peace activism that promoted general frames of justice, equality and inclusion. Often, this involved singing songs connected to previous social movements throughout American history. Anthems of the civil rights movement such as "This Little Light of Mine," "Down by the Riverside," "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around," and "We Shall Overcome" were mentioned as being common sing alongs during peace mobilizations.

Pete Seeger was particularly excited to share the story of "We Shall Overcome" which was originally used as a labor movement song before it became a civil rights anthem and then was later adopted by the anti-war movement. ([View Pete Seeger interview video](#))

And "We Shall Overcome" was originally a fast gospel song. [Sings and claps], "I overcome; I overcome." And in the late nineteenth century, they turned it into a union song, "We Will Overcome." And in 1946, there were 300 tobacco workers on strike in Charleston, South Carolina, and one of them liked to sing this song very slow. Around the picket line, they might have been warming themselves around the little fire. And they say, "Oh here comes Lucille!" Her name was Lucille Simmons. "And now we'll hear that song sung slower than we've heard it ever sung." [Sings] "We will overcome." Harmony, basses, altos. Well, a teacher at a labor school heard it; she taught it to me. I put it in our little song magazine, "People's Songs: 1947." However, it was my friend, Guy Carawan, who really introduced it to the civil rights movement. And they adopted the idea of crossing your hands when you sing it so that [demonstrates] your left hand reaches over to your right and grasps the right hand of the person on your right, and your right hand reaches over to your left and grabs the left hand of the person on your left. And you sway a little bit as you sing it. [Sings "We Shall Overcome."] (Musician Pete Seeger)

Similarly, other respondents emphasized how using Negro spirituals from the abolition movement were particularly meaningful in informing their activism. One

respondent noted that singing Negro spirituals, in particular, made her feel connected to the rich legacy of social change work over time.

When you sing certain songs – and especially if you go farther, farther back...the songs that have been used sort of throughout decades by different groups. And all of the sudden, you are connected to African Americans living in slavery. And I feel like that's a very profound thing...I guess some people would think that's kind of depressing that here we are singing the same songs and not much had changed. [laughs] But I don't feel that way. [laughs] It's a source of strength that it goes back so far and runs so deep. And here you part of it – singing it again – reinterpreting it. (FG Participant, Amanda)

Peter Yarrow also discussed how his original involvement with protest music came through learning Negro spirituals and highlighted the importance of sharing anti-war songs that articulated more generalized social justice frames that ultimately proposed alternatives to the status quo.

Even implicit in a so-called anti-war song is the ... appeal for its alternative....My earliest awareness of so-called protest music was singing songs like [sings and claps] "I'm on my way, I'm on my way. And I won't turn back, and I won't turn back." That's a Negro spiritual. Many of the Negro spirituals had, as a perspective, the idea of not just reaching heaven, but the idea that maybe some fairness was due to people in this life. (Musician Peter Yarrow)

In addition to singing songs from the abolition and civil rights movements that emphasized more general frames of peace and justice, respondents also noted how pop songs from the Vietnam era that highlighted themes of interconnectedness and universal humanity were used in collective singing such as "Give Peace a Chance" by the Plastic Ono Band. One respondent even noted the adoption of the seemingly apolitical pop single, "Lean on Me" by Bill Withers, as an impromptu anti-war sing along in the aftermath of September 11th, given its frames of inclusiveness and universality.

Interestingly enough, when I think of 9-11, I think of going to Union Square Park and what I really think of is the song, "Lean on Me," which people sang very often as they were trying to comfort each other. It's not an anti-war song, but it became one in that context. Because people were giving each other comfort and support instead of just be angry and saying, you know – "We want to get even." They were saying, "Let's come together and try to understand each other and make each other feel better." (FG Participant, Martha)

When asked which new songs have emerged since September 11th as effective group sing alongs, the only song that was mentioned repeatedly was "Peace, Salaam, Shalom," written by Pat Humphries and Sandy O (the folk duo known as Emma's Revolution). Respondents noted that the universal nature of the song's framing (i.e., appealing to peace in different languages) and its catchy and simple chorus made it a particular favorite during anti-war efforts.

Because we've been involved in a lot of the Israel/Palestine stuff and actually... when I was in Israel – "Peace, Salaam, Shalom"...we sang that as we were going to the border crossing and outside of some of the American and Israeli ministry buildings. And it was very simple. But there was something about it that you could feel yourself disarming your heart and trying to – in that moment – to de-escalate the tension – just in singing of those words, peace, salaam, shalom. (FG Participant, Anna)

The stories shared above demonstrate how important inclusive and expansive framing has become to these peace activists. Overall, they strongly believe that their peace activism falls under the larger umbrella progressive, social change work. This belief links them not only to other peace and justice issues of the current moment, but also connects them to social justice movements throughout America's history.

We can draw on Snow et al.'s concept of frame extension to see why participants resonated with anti-war sing alongs that reflect broader themes of peace and justice issues. As modern cosmopolitans, they believe in the interconnectedness of numerous social justice movements, not only in the U.S., but throughout the world. In fact, some respondents noted that they were particularly moved by music from the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa and the New Song Movement in Latin America. Therefore, it makes sense that when an anti-war sing along performed the function of frame extension, in reflecting broader peace and justice issues, they saw it as particularly useful in promoting peace work.

FUNCTION 2: STRENGTHENING COGNITIVE LIBERATION AMONGST ACTIVISTS

Respondents also noted that group sing alongs helped to serve the function of strengthening cognitive liberation amongst activists, by forging a sense of group consciousness and feelings of efficacy in their activist efforts.

It can be a very effective tool for unifying or gelling people. I think they (protest songs or anti-war songs) act as a "rallying point" for people who...protest. (Musician Mark Mangold)

Absolutely, I believe that folk music, as I have said, and music of conscience and music of concern and music of protest and affirmation can absolutely coalesce the determination of people to go and do something. I've even had that feeling. People say, "OK, we feel it now, where do we march? Lead us. We're gonna..." They're ready. They're ready, not just because they themselves have felt it, but because they felt it in tandem with hundreds of thousands... tens of thousands of others who have been there together. That's the way it functions...because they coalesced a common determination to do x,y, or z. (Musician Peter Yarrow)

I remember being on a bus going down to DC...And people singing you know "This Little Light of Mine" on the bus and coming up with verse after verse about what are we fighting for...and that being really inspiring and that being with me the whole time I was there. And it would be with me well after I was at the protest. And it [was] sort of fueling my need to be an activist and to want to change things...just feeling empowered by just having everyone sing the same lyrics. Yeah – it just makes you feel like you are not alone. And if you are not alone in the movement you feel strong enough to go on. (Musician Peter Siegel)

The power of collective singing and its unifying effects has been recognized by the musician and scholar, Bernice Johnson Reagon, who analyzed the role of freedom songs of the civil rights movement for her doctoral degree in American history. Dr. Reagon, a former civil rights activist and freedom singer, who later formed the renowned black women's ensemble, Sweet Honey in the Rock, confirms the unifying nature of group sing alongs:

As a student leader and activist...I sang and stood in the sound of the congregational singing of the freedom songsI understood how the singing not only pulled us together, but became our articulate collective testimony.... [Reagon, 2008, p. 1]

We can see how collective singing reinforced these themes of cooperation and trust in the following excerpts of respondents who engaged in high-risk activism and were later arrested. ([View focus group interview video 1](#))

I mean there's nothing like watching your friends get arrested in silence or being arrested in silence as opposed to a whole bunch of people singing a song that you know is meant to support you as you are being put in back of a police wagon. It just changes-it shifts the balance of power – or at least in our minds at least for a moment. They may be arresting people and they control the environment in that way. But you have the power to cover over that with words and music that gives you back your own sense of justice and liberty in that moment. (FG Participant, Joanne)

There's something about being in a jail cell and hearing music echoing through the halls from someone in another jail cell. It's not only that you know you are not alone – there is something that transcends space when that happens. (FG Participant, Matt)

From the quotes above, we can see how collective singing reinforces respondents' feelings of belonging to a larger community, something larger than themselves and empowers activists to believe that they can ultimately affect change. Even when peace activists describe being punished for their activism (through enduring arrests and jail time), they emphasize that music serves to transport them and encourage them in their struggles for peace and justice. As one of the participants noted, she much preferred to go through arrest singing rather than in silence and how collective singing is cognitively perceived as tipping the balance of power in favor of the activists (even if just for a moment).

Linking back to McAdam's concept of cognitive liberation, we see that group sing alongs solidify the interpersonal links between activists and makes them believe that justice and liberty are possible. This function of collective singing is particularly important for those who engage in high-risk activism. In the absence of the strong integration that collective singing provides, it could be argued that these protestors would feel more powerless in their efforts for social change.

FUNCTION 3: APPEALING TO AND REINFORCING A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVISTS' EMOTIONS

A third important function that group sing alongs serve is activating a wide range of emotional responses. Throughout this study, respondents asserted that the various emotions evoked through group sing alongs were powerful in appealing to and reinforcing what they wanted to feel as they engaged in activism. ([View focus group interview video 2](#))

I think that is – as I've said before kind of the power of song. It triggers an emotion in you quicker than most things can. Sometimes you are at a demonstration and you think of "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn you Around." There's times where it's completely hokey and there's times when that's the right emotion for what I'm feeling right now...It just transports it to you another place, emotionally. (FG Participant, Bud)

Other respondents noted that it was important for protest songs to reflect the full range of human emotions and experience (e.g., reinforcing feelings of anger, amusement, etc.).

Protest songs have been around a long time. Most people think that they are supposed to be serious, angry songs but some of the best protest songs are funny, hilarious. And there's all kinds. (Musician Pete Seeger)

I look to the [protest] music to address all the emotions that we have about everything in life. I look for angry songs but I think we look for the full spectrum. Because we experience the full spectrum. (FG Participant, Joanne)

Indeed, most people are intuitively aware that a wide range of emotional responses to music is possible and research has confirmed this. Gabrielsson's study (2001) of strong emotional experiences of music (SEM) confirms that emotions felt through music can reflect multiple and nuanced states of human consciousness and feeling. To adequately reflect the wide breadth of humans' emotional responses to music, Gabrielsson surveyed 141 respondents concerning their most common emotional reactions to music and subsequently identified 44 unique emotional responses based on the respondents' free descriptions (2001).

Furthermore, music scholars have noted that songwriters often intentionally set out to make the listener feel specific emotions and will use varying tempos and keys to evoke these emotions in their music (Levitin 2006). Juslin and Laukka have also extensively studied how listeners emotionally understand the composers' message and have also studied how listeners have their own emotional responses to a song, regardless of the composers' intent (2004). Based on their comprehensive review of over a hundred studies spanning a variety of disciplines, Juslin and Laukka assert that emotions in music can be conceptualized in terms of perceiving and inducing. They classify these two states as follows: (1) emotion perception (i.e., music makes listeners perceive the emotions the artist/s or songwriter/s is/are trying to convey through the music); and (2) emotion induction (i.e., music elicits listeners to feel certain emotions themselves that may be entirely independent of the artist/s' or songwriters' intent) (2004).

To illustrate this, it is important to note that songwriters of protest music and sing alongs are particularly aware of the various emotions that they hope to elicit in their listeners (i.e., emotion perception). For example, Peter Yarrow discusses how he tries to communicate various emotions (or increase emotion perception in his listeners) through protest songs.

...music goes beyond the intellect...if I just sing...you know from what I'm feeling that there is sadness and hope-all those things. It's a language unto itself. And you put 'em together; it slips right through the cracks and under your ribs and gets right to your heart. (Musician Peter Yarrow)

As illustrated above, group sing alongs serve a vital function in appealing to and reinforcing a wide range of activist emotions. This research builds upon the burgeoning social movements and protest music literature (Corte & Edwards 2008; Futrell et al., 2006; Roscigno et al., 2002) in understanding how message music works emotionally and how it serves a key role in mobilization efforts.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that group sing alongs have helped to mobilize U.S. peace activism from the Vietnam era to the Afghanistan/Iraq era through three specific functions: 1) extending frames to include broader peace and justice issues; 2) strengthening cognitive liberation amongst activists; and 3) appealing to and reinforcing a wide range of activists' emotions. It has provided the reader with

numerous excerpts of discussions with 22 respondents (i.e., focus groups conducted with 17 activists and in-depth interviews with five musicians) to illustrate these three functions and has discussed the overall importance of collective singing in U.S. peace activism.

However, I do not want to conclude this article by saying to all peace activists that they should collectively sing “Kumbayah,” hold hands, and walk into the sunset. I wish to address lingering concerns that were raised in my discussions about the future of collective singing in U.S. peace activism.

One concern is the over usage of many group sing alongs, especially those from the civil rights movement, which respondents say now seem “cheesy” or “hokey”, given their constant repetition at protests. One respondent joked:

If I have to sing “This Little Light of Mine” one more time – I’m out – that’s it... I may join the military. [laughter] There are songs that we have sung far too many times. (FG Participant, Jim)

Another respondent added:

I feel the same way... like a lot of them have lost their juice. Some of them we’ve had to sing over and over again and it feels more like a chore. (FG Participant, Sarah)

It is critical to peace activism going forward that new sing alongs be written and disseminated to ensure the vibrancy of the collective singing tradition within U.S. peace activism. However, respondents repeatedly mentioned yet another concern over the changing U.S. media landscape which has hindered the dissemination of new U.S. anti-war music. Many respondents noted that some anti-war songs that became group sing alongs like “Give Peace a Chance” were massive hits during the Vietnam era and were disseminated to their generation through radio play. They expressed concern over increasing media consolidation through the growth of radio conglomerates such as Clear Channel, which has led to the homogenization of much of the music on the radio. They noted that this media environment thwarted the chances for new anti-war music to be heard. In addition, they complained about increasing media fragmentation due to the advent of the Internet and the MP3 player. Some noted that consumers are becoming more and more individualized in their music choices as they personally select which songs to download onto their computers or MP3 players. In such a media environment, it would be difficult for the average person to encounter new anti-war songs unless they pro-actively searched for them.

A final concern raised by respondents was that collective singing, in general, has declined since the Vietnam era. In the second focus group, made up of mostly undergraduate students, one older female respondent noted how common collective singing was in the sixties; and she interjected and asked the student respondents if the current generation still plays guitar and sings songs together. The students responded that you generally do not see that on their campus and they agreed that it was something that they believed their generation was missing out on. Another student responded that they do have talent shows at their college where people sing (i.e., similar to an American Idol format⁷), but these are formal performances that focus on critiquing individuals and there is no emphasis placed on singing together.

⁷ American Idol is a television show which features aspiring singers whose performances are critiqued by a panel of judges. The judges eliminate singers in weekly competitions as the television season proceeds. The final winner is then determined by an interactive television audience.

Given these concerns, I would urge conflict transformation practitioners and peace movement leaders to take action to ensure that the collective singing tradition is not lost. Peace activists need to recognize the importance of collective singing and they should actively work to incorporate shared performance into their activism. One respondent noted how she is hoping to do a workshop on collective singing in her activist community.

I really wanted to...at one of these retreats where a lot of our community comes together...do a workshop on singing. How to sing, – what is harmony...and how do you achieve it. I think we would really benefit from it...because there is something amazing about singing together – as we were saying, having this expression of emotion. (FG Participant, Frida)

In addition, new group sing alongs need to be written and creatively disseminated, despite the changing media environment. One respondent urged activists to:

...never get discouraged by the corporatization of music or anything like that. Of course – it can be discouraging. But it doesn't stop you from banging your guitar and singing "Look, he's got the whole world in his hands – we're all brothers and sisters. Don't ever let it – it can't stop you – you can do it. It can make a big difference in people's lives. (Musician Michael Lydon – Interview 8/30/06)

Finally, I wish to end by discussing Pat Humphries' contribution to the sing along tradition in this most current era. Her name repeatedly came up in the discussions, not just for her major contribution of co-writing "Peace, Salaam, Shalom," (the sing along that has come to represent post 9-11 peace activism) but also for other songs like "Keep on Moving Forward" and "Common Thread." One respondent emphasized the importance of "Common Thread":

So when I think of songs that have made it around the world – I think of Pat Humphries' "Common Thread". There was a story on NPR about...how it never made it on mainstream radio. And yet people are singing it in every country in the world right now because of this sort of this grassroots movement of it through summer camps, through protest. It was sung at the International Women's Festival... in China. And it's this...wonderful song; Pete [Seeger] has sung it. And it's very radical, but it's got a universal theme. (Musician Peter Siegel)

Pat Humphries is thus providing a role model for how collective singing can be creatively promoted in the current media landscape to promote music's role in conflict transformation. Through the website of her folk duo, Emma's Revolution, (where they encourage downloading sheet music for their songs) and through creative YouTube clips, Emma's Revolution is finding a way to disseminate music and to encourage future generations of peace activists to use collective singing to good effect as demonstrated by [this short clip](#) of the performance of "Peace, Salaam, Shalom".

APPENDIX – ARTIST BIOS

Michael Lydon was one of the founding editors and early writers for *Rolling Stone* magazine. He has extensive knowledge of social movements and popular culture, having worked as a Boston Globe reporter covering the civil rights movement in the early 60s and then later as a Newsweek journalist covering music and the counterculture in both London and San Francisco towards the decade's end. During that time, Lydon interviewed many counterculture icons including John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Janis Joplin, and Jerry Garcia and toured with the Rolling Stones. He is also the author of eight books, including *Rock Folk*, *Boogie Lightning*, and *Ray Charles: Man and Music*. A dedicated musician and jazz guitarist himself, Lydon recently released his "Love at First Sight" CD and can often be found playing clubs around New York City's East Village. (Michael Lydon, personal communication, August 24, 2008)

Mark Mangold is a songwriter, musician and producer having been in a number of major label bands throughout the years (Valhalla on United Artists, American Tears on Columbia, Touch on Atlantic) in addition to a number of bands on Indie labels. As a songwriter he has written songs for Michael Bolton, Cher, Benny Mardones, Jennifer Rush and numerous other recording artists. Mangold has been observing and participating in the music scene since the 60's and has witnessed, and participated in, the varied changes and metamorphosis which has reflected, to an extent, the culture of our nation and the world. (Mark Mangold, e-mail message to author, February 10, 2009.)

Pete Seeger is the foremost contemporary popularizer of American folk music. From his pop-folk successes with the Weavers in the late '40s, through the '50s, when he was blacklisted by the government, through the '60s. Through his outspoken commitment to the antiwar and civil rights struggles, until now, Seeger has remained an indomitable, resourceful, and charming performer. He wrote folk standards – including "If I Had a Hammer" (with Lee Hays) and "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" – and has preserved and given exposure to thousands of other songs. With the arrival of the Vietnam War protests, Seeger was rediscovered by a younger audience. In 1965 the Byrds had a #1 hit with Seeger's "Turn! Turn! Turn!," a Biblical passage set to music. From the mid '70s on, Seeger has worked regularly with Woody Guthrie's son Arlo. He has crusaded for ecology with the sloop Clearwater, giving concerts along the Hudson River. In 1994 he received the Presidential Medal of the Arts, as well as a Kennedy Award. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an early influence in 1996. Seeger has toured and sung around the world. (Adapted from Rolling Stone 2009).

Peter Siegel was raised on Phil Ochs, Jewish politics, the post 60's environmental activism of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Pete Seeger, the old time square dance scene, Warner Brothers cartoons, Jimi Hendrix and 70's and 80's pop. Peter's work as a singer songwriter, music teacher, kids' performer composer and player of roots music and fiddle tunes on stringed instruments has earned him acclaim locally and around the nation. He was the 2004 winner of the WRSI (The River – western MA) singer songwriter contest, 2nd place finalist in VT's Solarfest singer songwriter showcase, he has had songs published in Sing Out! Magazine, and various fiddle tune compilations including the Portland Collection (Adapted from <http://www.petersiegel.com/index.php?page=about> , retrieved August 30, 2008).

Peter Yarrow is a successful artist and activist. His gift for songwriting has produced some of the most moving songs that Peter, Paul & Mary [60s folk hit group] have recorded, including "Puff, The Magic Dragon," "Day Is Done," and "Light One Candle". Many issues have moved Peter Yarrow to dedicate his time and talent over the years: hunger, homelessness, nuclear threat, education, equal rights and more. Yarrow is a recipient of the Allard K. Lowenstein Award, which he received in 1982 for advancing the causes of human rights, peace and freedom. Yarrow's most recent project utilizes music and video along with character education curricula to help establish safe, compassionate and nurturing environments for children in schools and summer camps across America. Launched in over 10,000 schools, Operation Respect: "Don't Laugh At Me" was hailed as a key initiative in our nation's response to the challenge of physical and emotional violence among children (Adapted from Bethany Music 2009).

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